

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

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What Will Happen to the Next Generation? (Part 4) Judges 2:8-15

Last month we left off considering how Israel had forsaken The Performance of God. Judges 2:12 reminds them of God's deliverance from the hand of Pharaoh, but think of all the other things that God had done for them. Going back to the beginning with Abraham, He chose them out of all the nations of the earth. There was nothing special about this people, but God selected them. He did not have to, but He wanted them as His own. He sent a family down to Egypt and brought out a powerful nation. He showed Himself strong against the gods of Egypt and then parted the Red Sea, so they could walk over on dry ground. When they needed bread to eat, He provided manna from heaven. When they wanted meat, He sent the quail. When they needed water, He made water come out of the rock. When they needed water on an earlier occasion and only found bitter water, He made it sweet. When they faced Amalek, God defeated that enemy. When they doubted God and would not go into the Promised Land, He had mercy and did not completely destroy them, but allowed their children to go into the land.

Moving on through history and closer to this generation that is described in Judges, God delivered Sihon and Og into their hands. He then annihilated Midian prior to the entrance into Canaan. When the Jordan River was in their way, He parted the waters and allowed them to cross on dry ground. The first enemy they faced was the town of Jericho. He made the walls fall down flat and provided an easy victory. After their defeat at Ai and subsequent judgment upon Achan, they defeated that little city. When faced with an alliance of five kings and they needed more time to defeat the enemy, God made the sun to stand still, so they could obey God's commandment to destroy those kings. The rest of Joshua concludes with how God

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defeated other enemies and then divided up the land that He had promised to each of the tribes.

After all that God had done for them, these same people turned their back on Him. They rejected and forsook the true God Who had done great wonders. If God had done nothing for them, but had simply made them His people, they should never have forsaken Him. But He had blessed and provided for them time and time again, and they still forsook Him.

But what about you? You claim the name of God and profess Jesus as your Savior, yet you follow the ways of the world. You dress like them, talk like them, and love the entertainment and music of the world. God has supposedly delivered you from the fires of Hell, yet instead of following Him faithfully, you follow the things of the world. Is that how you show your love to Him?

To apply it on a national scale, this nation was started as a place to worship the true God. Do not believe this modern revisionism that says any god is acceptable. The Separatists, commonly referred to as the Pilgrims, came to this New World to worship the true God—the God of the Bible. Patrick Henry is often quoted as saying that this nation was founded as a place to promote the Christian religion. Our forefathers allowed and promoted freedom of religion. They did not intend to persecute or prosecute anyone regardless of their religious affiliation or lack of religion. But they did not intend to found a nation that would reject God. As long as the leaders of this country loved God, or at least acknowledged God, He blessed us immensely. When enemies attacked, He defeated them. When we needed material things, He blessed us super abundantly. And no nation on earth has ever been blessed as much as the United States.

But now generations have arisen that have forsaken the God of their fathers. Instead of freedom of religion, we have freedom from religion. It has almost reached the point that all beliefs are acceptable except the belief in the true God—the very belief upon which this

nation was founded. The God Who was so prominent in this nation for so long has been rejected and removed from the place of prominence that He deserves. Where once He was named in our founding documents, and His name was carved on the walls of our buildings, we have sought to remove His name from our public places. Where presidents, congressman, governors, and legislators once prayed to Him, and nobly called upon the people to pray to Him, we no longer see any need to call upon Him. We even argue whether we should pray to Him in our council meetings and whether His name should be mentioned in public. Where we once wanted to live according to His laws and based our laws upon His laws, we now seek to remove any trace of His laws from our walls and books. We now have to vote to see if what He declared an abomination—homosexuality—is acceptable or not. We have replaced our faith in God for pride in our industry and in our own ability to solve every problem. We must return to the God of our fathers! As Daniel prayed for his people in Daniel 9:3-19, we must pray to the true God and ask for forgiveness for the sins of our nation. We must confess our nation’s pride and its rejection of Him. We must plead with Him to show mercy and earnestly pray that this nation would turn back to Him.

But there is more. As awful as the Forsaking of the Posterity was, the people of Israel went further. The end of verse 12 and all of verse 13 describe **The Following of the Posterity**. God condemns His people by describing how they *“followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.”* Every time I read these verses I stand amazed. How could a nation that had seen God do so many wonderful things reject Him? But not only do they forsake Him, they replace Him with false gods. What were these people thinking? How could they replace the God Who had made them with a god that they had made? How could they replace the Almighty God with a weak, anemic, powerless god? It seems so amazingly crazy, but that is exactly what they did.

Consider some details of the Following of the Posterity. First, we will focus on the gods themselves, what I call The Object. Baal is the first god mentioned. This was a sun-god who would provide heat and light, but at times he would send too much heat, resulting in drought. (Apparently this god did not know how to control his power, or he enjoyed watching his worshipers suffer.) In order to appease him, a first-born would be sacrificed. This god is mentioned several times later in Scripture. As you read, you will come across the phrase “passing through the fire.” This phrase is a reference to sacrifice.

It is very interesting to note that this god Baal was very similar to Ra—the sun god of the Egyptians. God had proved His superiority over Ra when He sent the plague of darkness upon Egypt for three days. Jehovah, the true God, proved that He was in control of the sun, not some false god of the Egyptians. God also proved His superiority and great power to another generation when He made the sun to stand still in the battle with the five kings in Joshua 10. This new generation should have been told of these great miracles but either were not told or refused to believe them. They rejected the true God, Jehovah, Who really did control the sun, and replaced Him with a man-made false god who, in fact, had no power at all.

As bad as the replacement of God was, the people became even more blasphemous. God had instituted the sacrifices in Exodus and Leviticus. He required an animal to be slain for those sacrifices. On the night of the first Passover, He said a lamb was to be slain for the firstborn in each family. This beautiful picture of Jesus Christ had now been replaced by the abominable offering of a child sacrifice to Baal. God required a sacrifice, but it was an animal that was to be offered. God **NEVER** required a child. Yet these Israelites had now resorted to this horrendous practice of child sacrifice. This is beyond the scope of my reasoning. How could they ever replace God’s wonderful practice of animal sacrifices with child sacrifices? But they did.

The second god mentioned, Ashtaroth, was the female counterpart

to Baal. In some places she represented the evening and morning stars. In other places she was a goddess of love and war. Sometimes prostitution was practiced in her name. Just reading a description of her makes one wonder why the Israelites would follow her. They rejected the true God, Who flung the stars from His fingertips, for a false goddess, who did not make the stars, but was made by man to represent the stars. They rejected the true God, Who truly was love and displayed that love to them many times, for a false goddess who represented a perversion of love. They rejected the God Who fought for them and defeated their enemies, for a goddess who was the goddess of war, but who was the goddess of the nations whom Israel had defeated in war. Why would they reject the God of victory for the goddess of defeat? It boggles my mind. How could they do such a thing? It makes no sense. They rejected the God of purity for a goddess of perversion. God told them not to commit adultery and fornication, but now they worshiped a goddess that wanted prostitution. They rejected truth for error. How sad! More next month.